Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MASERU 00278 311511Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------101434 311517Z /53
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8159
INFO AMEVBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

S E C R E T MASERU 0278

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

FROM AMBASSADOR NORLAND

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD, PEPR, SF, LT
SUBJECT: LESOTHO CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR OIL EMBARGO

REF: A. STATE 266947, B. MASERU 2071, C. GABORONE 2878,

1. SUMMARY. THE FIRST ITEM OF BUSINESS RAISED URGENTLY WITH ME AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TWO HOURS AFTER MY RETURN JANUARY 25 WAS A REQUEST FOR BACKGROUND I COULD PROVIDE ON STATE DEPARTMENT REQUEST (TRANSMITTED BY AMBASSADOR MAKEKA FROM WASHINGTON) FOR GO STUDY AND DOCUMENTATION ON EFFECTS OF POSSIBLE OIL EMBARGO. THE SUBJECT WAS ALSO SUBJEQUENTLY RAISED BY PRIMIN JONATHAN, FONMIN MOLAPO AND SENIOR PERMSEC MABATHOANA ON JANUARY 26. END SUMMARY.

2. IMMEDIATELY UPON RETURNING HERE JANUARY 25 I WAS INVITED TO MEET WITH PERMSEC FOREIGN AFFAIRS MASHOLOGU WHO RAISED THE

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SUBJECT OF LESOTHO'S CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR POSSIBLE OIL EMBARGO. MASHOLOGU SAID AMBASSADOR MAKEKA HAD TELPHONED HIM TO RELAY "STATE DEPARTMENT'S" INTEREST IN GOL DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS IN EVENT OF OIL EMBARGO. HE WONDERED IF I COULD GIVE HIM BACKGROUND ON WHAT WAS DESIRED THAT MIGHT HELP THE WORKING GROUP THE GOL HAD SET UP TO DEVELOP A RESPONSE. WHEN I CONFESSED TO LACK OF ANY SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE REQUEST, MASHOLOGU

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OUTLINED TENTATIVE GOL CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING ITS OPTIONS.

3. MASHOLOGU RECALLED FOR EXAMPLE THAT SAG HAD NOTIFIED GOL SEVERAL YEARS AGO THAT IN THE EVENT OF AN OIL EMBARGO ON SOUTH AFRICA, SAG WILL NOT HAVE POL TO SUPPLY TO LESOTHO. HOWEVER, SAG WOULD BE PREPARED TO UTILIZE SOUTH AFRICAN REFINERY CAPACITY TO REFINE CRUDE FOR LESOTHO (AS WELL AS BOTSWANA AND SWAZILAND) IF RPT IF THESE COUNTRIES COULD OBTAIN THEIR OWN CRUDE. BECAUSE THIS PLEDGE DATES FROM THE 1973 OIL EMBARGO, MASHOLOGU SAID GOL INTENDS TO QUERY SAG TO SEE WHETHER THEIR PLEDGE IS STILL VALID. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY ABOUT WHETHER THE CUSTOMS UNION MIGHT BE INVOKED OR SOME SYSTEM OF "SEALED CARS" COULD BE DEVELOPED, MAHSOLOGU SAID HE SAW NO POSSIBILITY OF RELIEF FROM EITHER OF THESE OPTIONS. THE BEST HOPE, ALTHOUGH A SLIM ONE, SEEMED TO BE A DEAL USING SAG REFINERY.

4. IN LATER TALK WITH SENIOR PERMSEC MABATHOANE HE ALSO REFERRED TO DEARTH OF OIL STORAGE CAPACITY IN LESOTHO AND CURRENT EFFORTS OF GOL TASK FORCE TO FORMULATE CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR POSSIBLE OIL EMBARGO. WHEN DCM AND I INDICATED THAT CURSORY EXAMINATION OF THIS PROBLEM IN WASHINGTON HAD LED TO PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION THAT THERE IS NO FEASIBLE WAY IN WHICH WE COULD ASSIST LESOTHO IN THE FACE OF A CUT-OFF OF POL DELIVERIES, MADUTHOANE REPLIED THAT GOL RECOGNIZED EXTREME DIFFICULTY OF THE PROBLEM LESOTHO WOULD FACE BUT INSISTED THAT GOL HAS TO MOVE AHEAD ON ITS OWN WITH CONTINGENCY PLANNING, HOWEVER UNREALISTIC, BECAUSE ITS

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EXISYXNCE WAS AT STAKE.

5. IN MEETING WITH PRIMIN JONATHAN (REF B) HE ALSO TOUCHED ON PROBLEM OF POSSIBLE OIL EMBARGO. THE PRIMIN SAID THAT HE RECOGNIZES AN OIL EMBARGO MAY NEVER COME BUT ACTING ON THE MAXIM "MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES", THE GOL IS STRIVING TO MAKE PROVISION FOR AN OIL STORAGE CAPACITY THAT WOULD GIVE THEM TWO MONTHS RESERVES. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT HAS APPROACHED "OUR FRIEND THE SHAH" BUT MAY ALSO COME TO THE USG FOR HELP. IN ITS PRESENT SITUATION LESOTHO WOULD BE CRIPPLED WITHIN HOURS IF SAG WERE TO CUT OFF OIL SUPPLIES.
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